

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 487

By Burchett

A RESOLUTION To honor the memory of Mrs. Sammie Lynn Puett of Knoxville.

WHEREAS, The members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the untimely death on October 11, 2001 of Sammie Lynn Puett, a University of Tennessee Professor of Journalism, university administrator, former commissioner of two state agencies, and Knoxville civic activist; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Puett was an exemplary public servant and consummate professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for her fellow citizens in numerous capacities; her warmth, enthusiasm and great motivational skill as an educator has influenced hundreds of students to excel and to pass her legacy on to others; and

WHEREAS, Sammie Lynn Scandlyn was born September 7, 1936 in Knoxville, and graduated from Knoxville Central High School with top academic honors in her graduating class; she earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Education from the University of Tennessee in 1958 and a Master of Science degree in Educational Psychology and Guidance from U.T. in 1966; and

WHEREAS, Having worked as a sales correspondent for Plasti-Line, Inc. of Knoxville, Mrs. Puett became a public relations consultant with the Tennessee Municipal Technical

Advisory Service and editor of *Tennessee Town and City*; following her distinguished career with MTAS, she embarked upon a professional relationship of 25 years with the University of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, In 1968, Sammie Lynn Puett joined the faculty of the U.T. School of Journalism as an Assistant and Associate Professor, where she demonstrated a superb ability to motivate her students, establishing lifetime friendships and inspiring great loyalty among those she taught; she also served as Assistant to the Dean of the U.T. College of Communications from 1968-73; and

WHEREAS, In September 1973, still holding her academic duties and titles, Mrs. Puett became Executive Assistant to the Chancellor of the Knoxville Campus, serving there for six years; in January 1979, Governor Lamar Alexander appointed her Commissioner of the Department of General Services and in January 1980, he appointed her Commissioner of the Department of Human Services, where in a little more than five years she was able to transform the struggling agency into a national model of efficiency in management and responsibility in financial management, as well as providing outstanding client service; and

WHEREAS, Upon her return to the University of Tennessee on June 1985, Sammie Lynn Puett became Assistant Vice President for Community Relations until January 1989, when she became Vice President for Public Service, Continuing Education and University Relations; her last position with U.T. commenced in August of 2000, when she was named Chancellor of the New College of the University of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Throughout her long career in business, education and public service, Sammie Lynn Puett served with a consistently high degree of professional ability, exceptional energy and concern for the welfare of both her students and those she supervised, and dedication and commitment to her assigned responsibilities; in every position that Mrs. Puett ever held, she earned the respect of her peers and superiors alike for the exemplary quality of her work; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Puett's leadership qualities led her to hold numerous offices in professional public relations organizations over the years, and her state government experiences were utilized nationally through her 1992-93 term as Chairperson of the National Welfare Simplification and Coordination Advisory Committee, as a panelist on the Study of the Quality Control Systems of Food Stamps, AFDC and Medicaid of the national Academy of Science in 1986-87, and as the 1984 Region IV Representative to the National Council of State Welfare Commissioners; and

WHEREAS, Sammie Lynn Puett's excellent organizational and administrative skills, her background in public relations and her ability to effectively communicate found further outlet in numerous civic organizations and activities; she served on the Board of Directors of several Knoxville financial institutions, held important posts on the Executive Committee of the Greater Knoxville Chamber of Commerce and the Board of Directors for United Way, served in various positions on several arts-related organizations, and served in other national, state and local organizations too numerous to list; and

WHEREAS, The numerous honors and awards received by Mrs. Puett included being named UT Torchbearer, being named a semi-finalist in the 1965 White House Fellows Program; the Silver Anvil (Community Relations Category) from the Public Relations Society of America in 1975; the Chancellor's Citation for Extraordinary Services to the University in 1979; the Women of Achievement Award from the University of Tennessee Commission on Women in 1980 and 1983; the Tribute to Women Award - Education Category, from the YWCA in 1987; the Sigma Delta Chi Annual Front Page Follies Honoree in 1989; the Lifetime Achievement Award from PRSA Volunteer Chapter in 1993; the Fountain City Woman of the Year in 1993; an Appreciation Award from the American Public Welfare Association in 1993; and Fundraising Volunteer of the Year Award for the Knoxville Opera Company, from the National Society of Fundraising Executives; and

WHEREAS, Sammie Lynn Puett was the first woman honored by a journalism scholarship in her name, and was further honored by having the University of Tennessee PRSA chapter and the Public Relations Student of the Year Award named for her; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Puett was an active and devout member of the Fountain City United Methodist Church, which she served faithfully for many years, as well as holding several important lay posts for the Holston Conference of the United Methodist Church; and

WHEREAS, Sammie Lynn Puett was also deeply devoted to her family, and she always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; she enjoyed the loving companionship of Gene Puett, her husband of almost 33 years; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Puett's passing elicited a torrent of tributes from her former students, fellow university professors and administrators, and professional peers in public relations and government; all gave glowing testimony to her outstanding abilities, great energy, warmth and humanity, and gift for motivation and inspiration; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Puett leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all her chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, It is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That we honor the memory of Mrs. Sammie Lynn Puett, reflecting fondly upon her impeccable character and her stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Mrs. Sammie Lynn Puett.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.